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Modern Missionaries: Canadian Postwar Technical Assistance Advisors in Southeast Asia

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Résumé de l'article

L'action canadienne d'après-guerre en Asie s'est souvent déroulée en marge des interventions gouvernementales, faisant appel à la charité missionnaire. Sur le plan politique, Ottawa favorisait l'ouverture des États sur l'Occident, tandis que sur le plan économique, ses politiques visaient à encourager l'avènement de nouveaux États à l'image du Canada. Les Canadiens oeuvrant dans les secteurs gouvernemental, transnational et non gouvernemental offraient alors leur propre pays en exemple.

Par leur travail, les conseillers techniques canadiens ont joué un rôle déterminant et apporté les conseils pratiques nécessaires pour orienter la destinée des États du sud-est asiatique. Ces « missionnaires modernes » se voyaient membres d'une collectivité transnationale au sein de laquelle le Canada pouvait occuper une place prééminente en s'engageant activement dans plusieurs organisations multilatérales. Aux côtés de l'ONU, le Canada mettait ses espoirs d'après-guerre dans les experts internationaux réunis par l'Administration de l'assistance technique des Nations unies, sous la houlette du fonctionnaire canadien Hugh Keenleyside et d'une équipe dont était membre George Cadbury, ancien dirigeant du Conseil de planification économique du gouvernement CCF de la Saskatchewan.

Cet article examine l'expérience et le rôle des conseillers techniques canadiens d'après-guerre en Asie du sud-est en s'appuyant sur quelques dossiers des années 1950 et 1960. Envisageant d'abord l'influence de la Fédération du commonwealth coopératif (CCF) sur l'idée de planification, l'étude s'arrête ensuite sur F.R. Scott, professeur de droit et poète montréalais qui a été le premier représentant résident de l'assistance technique des Nations unies en Birmanie, sur Benjamin Higgins, économiste de McGill qui a été le premier conseiller financier du Bureau national de planification de l'Indonésie, et sur J.T. Cawley, sous-ministre des ressources naturelles de la Saskatchewan, qui a été conseiller en chef des affaires pétrolières auprès du gouvernement indonésien.

Modern Missionaries: Canadian Postwar Technical Assistance Advisors in Southeast Asia

DAVID WEBSTER

Abstract

Postwar Canadian approaches to Asia were often in the non-governmental realm, drawing on the country's missionary heritage. While diplomats in Ottawa worked for pro-Western states in the political realm, Canadian policies on economic development also aimed at building new states in the Canadian image. Canadians in government, transnational and non-governmental positions offered their own country as a model.

The international experts called together by the UN Technical Assistance Administration were central to Canadian postwar hopes and aspirations. The Administration, headed by Canadian civil servant Hugh Keenleyside, also included staff member George Cadbury, previously director of the Saskatchewan CCF government's Economic Planning Board. It was individual Canadian technical advisers like these who offered the hands-on advice and played the crucial role in shaping policy taken by Southeast Asian states. These "modern missionaries" imagined themselves as part of a transnational community, one in which Canada could play a leadership role by being an active member of multilateral organizations.

This paper examines the experience and role of postwar Canadian technical advisers in Southeast Asia, drawing on selected cases from the 1950s and 1960s. After considering the influence of the Canadian Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) on the idea of planning, it looks at F.R. Scott, the Montreal law professor and poet who served as the first UN Technical Assistance Resident Representative in Burma; Benjamin Higgins, the McGill economist who served as first financial advisor for the Indonesian National Planning Bureau; and J.T. Cawley, the Saskatchewan deputy minister of natural resources who was chief petroleum advisor to the Indonesian government.

Résumé

L'action canadienne d'après-guerre en Asie s'est souvent déroulée en marge des interventions gouvernementales, faisant appel à la charité missionnaire. Sur le plan politique, Ottawa favorisait l'ouverture des États sur l'Occident, tandis que sur le plan économique, ses politiques visaient à encourager

l'avènement de nouveaux États à l'image du Canada. Les Canadiens œuvrant dans les secteurs gouvernemental, transnational et non gouvernemental offraient alors leur propre pays en exemple.

Par leur travail, les conseillers techniques canadiens ont joué un rôle déterminant et apporté les conseils pratiques nécessaires pour orienter la destinée des États du sud-est asiatique. Ces « missionnaires modernes » se voyaient membres d'une collectivité transnationale au sein de laquelle le Canada pouvait occuper une place prééminente en s'engageant activement dans plusieurs organisations multilatérales. Aux côtés de l'ONU, le Canada mettait ses espoirs d'après-guerre dans les experts internationaux réunis par l'Administration de l'assistance technique des Nations unies, sous la houlette du fonctionnaire canadien Hugh Keenleyside et d'une équipe dont était membre George Cadbury, ancien dirigeant du Conseil de planification économique du gouvernement CCF de la Saskatchewan.

Cet article examine l'expérience et le rôle des conseillers techniques canadiens d'après-guerre en Asie du sud-est en s'appuyant sur quelques dossiers des années 1950 et 1960. Envisageant d'abord l'influence de la Fédération du commonwealth coopératif (CCF) sur l'idée de planification, l'étude s'arrête ensuite sur F.R. Scott, professeur de droit et poète montréalais qui a été le premier représentant résident de l'assistance technique des Nations unies en Birmanie, sur Benjamin Higgins, économiste de McGill qui a été le premier conseiller financier du Bureau national de planification de l'Indonésie, et sur J.T. Cawley, sous-ministre des ressources naturelles de la Saskatchewan, qui a été conseiller en chef des affaires pétrolières auprès du gouvernement indonésien.

A wave of Canadian “technical advisors” travelled overseas in the postwar decades, preaching a hopeful message of development to newly-independent states whose governments were receptive to that message. Many were despatched to Southeast Asia, a region shifting from the sphere of British informal empire to that of American informal empire. In these years, some would argue, so was Canada. Canada was also engaged in the economic development of its own peripheral regions — an experience which informed Canadians who went abroad as technical advisors. The postwar boom seemed to indicate that Canada was on the right track, that other developing countries could follow the Canadian model and become prosperous themselves. In the words of R.G. Nik Cavell, an aid programme administrator:

We are new; we have recently emerged from colonial status; we have vastly improved our living standards; and we have done all this within a framework of democracy, capitalism and complete freedom. Could we not, without being too obvious about it, put our example before the South East Asian nations as one they might find it advantageous to follow[?] As a very prosperous young

nation might it not be considered almost our duty to outline what we have achieved and how we have accomplished it?¹

In other words, Canada offered a model for development. Yet the Canadian state's capacity was limited and its attentions directed elsewhere. The Canadian model was carried, then, mostly by individual technical advisors, and mostly through multilateral channels — above all, the technical assistance machinery of the United Nations (UN). In carrying the model, they refined it and found common ground with the governments of new, modernizing states.

History, to many in this period, meant modernization. Recent studies have turned that on its head: modernization becomes part of history, rather than history being simply an ascent towards modernization.² This paper follows those studies, taking preliminary snapshots of Canadian technical advisors in two new states, Indonesia and Burma. In examining case studies, it follows Ruth Compton Brouwer's work on missionary-linked professional women in Asia and Africa and the suggestion by Sunil Amrith and Glenda Sluga among others that personal narratives shed light on larger themes in global history.³ Technical advisors were in a sense "modern missionaries," their gospel not one of Christian salvation, but rather of progress and modernity. In this sense, they were also agents of a shifting imperial order in the region, just as Christian missionaries in Asia had been before them. An examination of technical advisors tests the boundaries of state and non-state realms, as the advisors served in pseudo-diplomatic capacities and in keeping with state strategies towards Asia. Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King believed officials "could not serve two masters," their government and the United Nations.⁴ Technical advisors set out to prove him wrong, trying to reconcile multiple masters: the global mission of development; the state they were sent to advise; the transnational global planning élite based out of the UN; and the Canadian state.

1 Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), RG25/7337/11038-40 [20.2], Cavell talk to the Directors' Meeting, Canadian Department of Trade & Commerce, 17 April 1956.

2 Nick Cullather, "Modernization Theory," in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, eds. Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Gilbert Rist, *The History of Development: From Western origins to global faith*, 2nd ed. (London: Zed Books, 2002); H.W. Arndt, *Economic Development: The history of an idea* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); M.P. Cowen and R.W. Shenton, *Doctrines of Development* (London: Routledge, 1996); Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American social science and "nation-building" in the Kennedy era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

3 Ruth Compton Brouwer, *Modern Women Modernizing Men* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002); Sunil Amrith and Glenda Sluga, "New Histories of the United Nations," *Journal of World History* 19, no. 3 (2008): 271.

4 J.W. Pickersgill and D.F. Forster, eds., *The Mackenzie King Record*, vol. 4 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 156.

The missionary inheritance of “development work”

The Canadian Christian missionary enterprise that opened in the late nineteenth century was vast, part of a global mission seeking nothing less than “the evangelization of the world in this generation.” Empire framed Canadian missions, even as Canadian missionaries developed their own models of how to carry out mission. To host societies, their nationality was not always visible. Many Canadians went as missionaries to British-ruled India. Those travelling to China were identified swiftly as British, even if British North Americans, a development which obscured the large number of missionaries from Canada by counting them, as their passports did until 1947, among British subjects. French-speaking Catholic missionaries, for their part, were aided by the French government’s role as “protector” of Catholic missions in China (including those parts occupied by Japan).⁵

Thus, Canada did not newly discover Asia after World War II; trans-Pacific connections were long-standing in the realm of missions and would continue in the realm of development. The Canadian government was at first reluctant to fund an aid programme for Asia. Cold War and trade motives convinced Ottawa to join the Colombo Plan for aid to South and Southeast Asia in 1950. Only after that initial decision did humanitarian motives come to the fore. Public opinion came to embrace development assistance rapidly, with development advisors playing an important role in the popularization of humanitarianism — just as the missionaries had done before. Government documents make it clear that the Colombo Plan aimed at promoting Cold War and trade goals, but humanitarian language quickly spread upwards to the top ranks of government. “Our Asian policy must comprise much more than mere opposition to Communism,” External Affairs Minister Lester Pearson told CBC radio listeners in 1954. “We must have a positive policy and convince the peoples of Asia, by deed and word, that free democracy is a vital liberating force and can do more for the individual, and society, than Communism can ever hope to do.”⁶

5 Alvin Austin, *Saving China: Canadian Missionaries in the Middle Kingdom 1888–1959* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986); Hamish Ion, *The Cross and the Rising Sun*, 3 vols. (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1990–1999); Ruth Compton Brouwer, *New Women for God: Canadian Presbyterian women and India missions, 1876–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); Simon Nantais, “Bombes, Bouddhas et Bandits: French-Canadian Missionaries in the Japanese Empire, 1921–1933,” paper presented to the annual meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, 31 May 2006.

6 Ademola Adeleke, “Ties without Strings? The Colombo plan and the geopolitics of international aid, 1950–1980,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1996); David Morrison, *Aid and Ebb Tide: A history of CIDA and Canadian development assistance* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1998); Lester Pearson, CBC New Year’s broadcast, 1 January 1954, *External Affairs* 6, no. 1 (1954): 35.

With Canadians ranked among the largest per capita contributors to the missionary effort in China, there was talk of a special Canadian vocation in missions. Newton Rowell, a prominent Methodist layman and sometime Unionist cabinet minister, suggested, “as the Roman was called to teach the world law, the Greek to teach the world art, the Hebrew to teach the world religion, so we in Canada, if true to our opportunities, may be called upon to lead the world in the work of world-wide evangelization.” That sense of leadership paled after the Second World War, as the frontiers of mission retreated. Canadian missionaries had to depart China after the establishment of the People’s Republic in 1949. They felt the “loss of China” almost as keenly as did conservative politicians in the United States, albeit in a different fashion. New mission fields would be found in Africa, but none could replace the emotive power of China in the missionary and public imagination.⁷

The missionary contribution in health care and education is often acknowledged as a clear link to “development work.”⁸ Such steps overseas echoed the social gospel at home in Canada. The well-known missionary Bob McClure identified this shift as a Canadian contribution to the way missionary work was imagined: “Such things as a fishery co-operative, cold storage plant for both fish and fruit, are things that come naturally to a Canadian mind but which never occur to the English mind as having anything to do with ‘mission’.”⁹ The reforming missionaries find their heirs less in today’s missionary evangelists, than in the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) who carry on missionary-derived development work. This was literally true in some cases, with development workers often brought up in religious homes. The strong presence of “mish kids” (born to missionaries in China or Japan) in Canada’s Department of External Affairs has often been noted. Lester Pearson, the foremost Canadian foreign policy figure in the early postwar years, was a son of the manse. So, too, were many Canadians who chose development work.¹⁰ Richard Mallon, who served in a number of advisory roles, called development advisors “the new missionaries,” all too often driven by a “prophet

7 Austin, 85–6 and *passim*. Sample missionary letters from the Sichuan mission, Canada’s largest, from this period are found in the United Church Archives, Fonds 502, Series 4/1, box 13, files 339 and 345, and box 14, file 369.

8 Karen Minden, *Canadian Development Assistance: the medical missionary model in West China, 1910–1952* (Toronto: Joint Centre for Asia Pacific Studies, 1989).

9 Robert McClure, letter from Gaza, c. 1953, cited in Munroe Scott, *McClure: Years of Challenge* (Toronto: Canec, 1979), 82.

10 John English, *Shadow of Heaven: The Life of Lester Pearson* (Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1989); Ruth Compton Brouwer, “When Missions Became Development: The Churches and CUSO in the 1960s — Linkages and Tensions,” paper presented to Canadian Historical Association, 2008.

11 Richard R. Mallon, *The New Missionaries: Memoirs of a Foreign Advisor in Less-Developed Countries* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Institute for International Development, 2000).

motive” and facing the same problem as missionaries: resistance to reform and change from their host society.¹¹

The religious inheritance to technical assistance slipped past the realm of individual faiths. An example comes from the Institute of Islamic Studies, established in 1951 at McGill University in Montréal, headed by former Presbyterian missionary Wilfred Cantwell Smith. This institute hoped, in Smith’s phrase, to “cross the bridge” between the West and the Islamic world.¹² His words echoed the rhetoric of policy-makers in Ottawa when speaking about foreign aid, cast as a humanitarian “bridge” between the West and Asia. Inevitably in the 1950s, that meant it had a Cold War aspect, with Islam cast as a possible ally against communism. Yet Wilfred Smith was no cold warrior. After leaving McGill to devote himself to the study of comparative religions, he became one of the most influential Christian thinkers and interpreters of religions of his generation. At McGill, however, he wanted to see Islam follow Christianity into internal reform. His great wish was to see the institute act “as a kind of midwife for the Islamic Reformation which is struggling to be born.”¹³ Its quest to act as a modernizing agent in the Muslim world saw a branch campus opened in Iran, along with great efforts in Turkey and Pakistan. It was most effective in Indonesia, where a “McGill mafia” grew up and came to dominate the Ministry of Religion and the Islamic education system, one key prop to the Indonesian developmentalist state. The most famous Indonesian graduate, Abdul Mukti Ali, pressed for traditional Muslim leaders to abandon politics and become “heavenly technocrats” [*teknokrat samawai*] aiding in the work of the developmentalist state.¹⁴

Pre-war China had retained its independence, but in highly compromised ways. A web of treaty ports, foreign jurisdiction, trade restrictions, and interpenetrating intrusions by European powers, the United States, and Japan made claims that China existed outside the colonized world very debateable. Britain, France, Japan, and (with its “open door” theories on trade) the United States all penetrated deeply into China. Missionaries could not stand aloof from that process. Southeast Asia was an area much more subject to formal colonialism — all countries save Thailand became European or American colonies. The

12 W.C. Smith, “The Institute of Islamic Studies,” *The Islamic Literature* 5, no. 3 (March 1953): 35–8. I explore further the IIS and its Indonesian impact in “Islam and Cold War Modernization in the Formative Years of the McGill Institute of Islamic Studies,” *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 32 (2005): 15–43.

13 McGill University Archives (hereafter MUA), RG2/208/5586, Smith’s proposal to James, 7 May 1951.

14 W.C. Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957), 293; Howard M. Federspiel, “Indonesia, Islam, and U.S. Policy,” *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 114; Karel Steenbrink, “Itinerant Scholars,” *Inside Indonesia* 52 (October–December, 1997); Muhammad Kamal Hassan, *Muslim Intellectual Responses to “New Order” Modernization In Indonesia* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kementerian Pelajaran, 1982).

region existed, too, within the realm of British informal empire. The trade of the Netherlands East Indies, for instance, relied upon British trade networks in many ways. The “imperialism of free trade” made Southeast Asia a British sphere even outside the areas of formal British rule (Burma, Malaya, Singapore, and parts of Borneo). Southeast Asia gradually slipped from British to American informal empire. Technical advice was one symbol of this shift, with American technical assistance missions criss-crossing the region. United Nations technical assistance work in Southeast Asia took place within this context.¹⁵

United Nations technical assistance missions

Missionaries did not go to China and other lands on their own: they went as representatives of transnational networks, in this case of the various Christian churches. The major church for the secular modernizers was the UN Technical Assistance Administration (UNTAA, later a bureau of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs), an organization with its own Department of Missions and Resident mission chiefs. The UNTAA was both an agency of the emerging international organization, and a concrete manifestation of American President Harry Truman’s “point four,” the call for technical assistance to developing countries.¹⁶ Its first director was Hugh Keenleyside, who had been one of the early diplomats in Canada’s embassy in Japan, ambassador to Mexico, an official in the Department of External Affairs, and commissioner of the Northwest Territories, and finally deputy minister of mines and resources. He could therefore point to experience in both foreign affairs and domestic economic development.

Keenleyside married those two themes when he headed a 1950 UN technical assistance mission to Bolivia. This mission had wider scope to analyze an economy than any previous UN technical mission. Press reports on the mission noted Bolivia as a synonym for chaos, with 70 presidents over 125 years, seven finance ministers over 15 months, and so on. The mission called for what amounted to “something between a trusteeship and a receivership over the Bolivian economy,” and, ultimately, provided the institutional seeds for the

15 John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, “The Imperialism of Free Trade,” *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, 6, no. 1 (1953): 1–15; William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: Dell, 1962); Steven Hugh Lee, *Outposts of Empire: Korea, Vietnam, and the Origins of the Cold War in Asia, 1949–1954* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995); Samuel P. Hayes, *The Beginning of American Aid to Southeast Asia: The Griffin Mission of 1950* (Lexington, MA: Heath Lexington, 1971).

16 Truman’s 1949 inaugural address named four foreign policy points, of which the last was “a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas.” The speech appears in multiple places, including *Department of State Bulletin*, 30 January 1949. The programme’s workings are outlined in Jonathon Bingham, *Shirt-Sleeve Diplomacy: Point 4 in Action* (New York: John Day, 1954).

UNTAA.¹⁷ One reason why technical assistance was “modish” in the early 1950s was that it came cheap, promising the uplift of half the world on a fraction of the funds spent rebuilding European trading economies through the Marshall Plan.¹⁸ But it also seemed a fair and non-colonial way to develop through skills sharing — a belief maintained even in the face of the clear continuity between post-colonial development plans laid out by India and other states, with earlier British Colonial Development Acts.¹⁹ Most importantly, there was enormous faith in technical assistance as a path to rapid development, with disproportionately large returns. Both Indonesian and American officials, for example, declared that technical aid could deliver a “hundredfold” return.²⁰

The foreign experts gathered under the UNTAA umbrella considered themselves to be global citizens working to create a new world through their work building individual new states’ economies. Many had worked together previously in universities or prior UN assignments and would work together again in area studies programmes, policy development institutions backed by major foundations, and elsewhere. They had ambiguous loyalties to their own country, to the country they advised, and to the UN as a global institution. By 1955, the UN had 431 experts spread across Asia, almost three-quarters of them advising on economic development, and was assisting the planning boards of nine countries.²¹ Attitudes at UN headquarters were highly sympathetic to the idea of non-communist economic planning, treating it as an objective, non-political science. Keynesian planning, in Michael Ward’s metaphor, was not a new philosophy challenging the old orthodoxy; rather, it “resembled a

17 Hugh L. Keenleyside, *Memoirs, vol. 2: On the bridge of time* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1982); John Toye and Richard Toye, *The UN and Global Political Economy: Trade, finance and development* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); Richard Jolly, et al., *UN Contributions to Development Thinking and Practice* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); LAC, Hugh Keenleyside papers, MG31 E102/8/Bolivia, Report of the UN mission of technical assistance to Bolivia, 1951; *ibid.*, MG31 E102/30/UNTAA appointment, UN Secretary-General Trygve Lie to Keenleyside, 4 March 1952; Michael L. Hoffman, “U.N. Mission to Bolivia Drafts Plan for Unique Economic Supervision,” *New York Times* (20 October 1950).

18 Soe Saing, *United Nations Technical Aid in Burma: A Short Survey* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1990), 11.

19 Amrith and Sluga, 261–4; *The Colombo Plan for Co-operative Economic Development in South and South-East Asia, Report by the Commonwealth Consultative Committee, London, September–October 1950* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1950); Clyde Sanger, *Malcolm MacDonald: Bringing Empire to an End* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995).

20 Secretary of Agriculture Brannan cited in Charles Wolf, Jr., *Foreign Aid: Theory and Practice in Southern Asia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960), 63; Cornell University Library, untitled Subandrio speech collection, Indonesian ambassador to UK Subandrio, speech to Scottish Provisional Committee for War on Want, Glasgow, 21 November 1953.

21 ECAFE, “UN Technical Assistance in Asia and the Far East 1950-1955,” United Nations Archives (hereafter UNA), Technical Assistance records, box 13, file 330/03 (4) [B].

Protestant critique of traditional Rome,” which shifted the emphasis, but remained within the assumption of previous capitalist economists.²²

It also meshed with Western state strategies. Canadian officials, for instance, saw UNTAA programmes as helping to create a “suitable investment climate” in less developed countries. If successful, technical aid “would discourage the rise of economic nationalism and lead toward a more extended multilateral system in international trade,” while ensuring “the under-developed countries will gradually achieve their purpose by evolution instead of revolution. If the latter should occur, world Communism would be quick to take advantage of it.”²³ UN technical aid and experts, according to parliamentary Under-Secretary for External Affairs Jean Lesage, “constitute the ‘other forces of the United Nations.’ While the soldiers of the United Nations are fighting in Korea to repel aggression, it is the privilege of these other ‘forces’ to contribute directly to the well-being of the countries in which their operations are conducted and in so doing to help ease the present international tension.”²⁴ This attitude held no less true for social democrats such as T.C. (Tommy) Douglas, premier of the province of Saskatchewan and later leader of the leftish federal New Democratic Party. As premier, Douglas saw “the tremendous opportunity ... to win the non-Communist nations of Asia. It seems to me that the Western powers have an opportunity which presents itself once in a lifetime to use India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma and Indonesia as demonstrations of what can be done through a combination of political and economic democracies.”²⁵

Canadian social democracy and the Saskatchewan model

Canadian social democrats played crucial roles in the UN’s far-flung technical assistance missions. It is therefore important to consider the planning ideal in Canadian socialist thinking before doing the same for Indonesia and Burma. The key organization pushing socialist planning in Canada was the League for Social Reconstruction (LSR), a group of professors in Toronto and Montréal whose “ideas about practical affairs were by definition academic.”²⁶ Central to the LSR was an effort to graft expert-directed social and economic planning to a democratic system, themes borrowed from the British Fabian Society. As the

22 Michael Ward, *Quantifying the World: UN ideas and statistics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 64-5.

23 Secretary of state for external affairs memorandum to cabinet, 20 Dec. 1949, *Documents on Canadian External Relations (DCER)* 1949, 405-9.

24 Lesage speech in parliament, 25 March 1952, *Canada House of Commons Debates*, 1952, 1: 758-64.

25 Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina (hereafter SAB), R-757, file 2, T.C. Douglas to G.W. Cadbury, 5 May 1954.

26 F.R. Scott, “A Decade of the League for Social Reconstruction,” *Saturday Night* (24 January 1942): 8.

Fabians influenced the British Labour party, the LSR influenced the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), the new political party formed by farmer, labour, and social groups in 1932. It was able to get its principles accepted in the 1933 Regina manifesto, the CCF's foundational document — so much so that one Saskatchewan socialist complained that “the core of this manifesto is largely the work of a group of eastern university professors.”²⁷

Foremost among those professors was F.R. (Frank) Scott, a well-known McGill University law professor and poet who became a top official in the national CCF and provided intellectual leadership on the question of planning in particular. Like many others, Scott was born into a religious home, son of Anglican Canon F.G. Scott. Like many others, he chose a secular career path, but was consciously informed by this inheritance. In 1944, amidst national mobilization to fight the Second World War, Scott called for wartime planning to continue into peacetime through a National Planning Commission, “a small body of experts” who would practice “democratic planning” since the “people’s representatives” in parliament would make the ultimate decisions.²⁸ With the CCF unable to win power nationally, no such commission was established in Canada. Commissions matching the description, however, became *de rigueur* in newly-independent countries that proclaimed their faith in socialism. Even as it stressed increasing production, the CCF saw economic development was a means to achieve social justice. In the words of Saskatchewan Premier Douglas: “Important as it is, economic development is clearly not an end in itself. It is also a means to achieve freedom from want, to provide security to and restore human dignity to every individual.”²⁹ This sentiment was not so different from that of third-world nationalist figures such as Indonesian President Sukarno, who often called independence a “golden bridge” to social justice rather than a final goal.

In both Canada and Asia, socialism in this period meant internationalism, including freer global trade. “We in the CCF look primarily to economic collaboration among nations for the essential basis of world peace,” wrote party leader M.J. Coldwell, adding that “economic planning at home finds its logical counterpart in agencies of international economic planning abroad.”³⁰ This

27 Michiel Horn, *The League for Social Reconstruction: Intellectual Origins of the Democratic Left in Canada 1930–1942* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 44.

28 F.R. Scott, “The Nature of Economic Planning,” in *Planning for Freedom: 16 Lectures on the CCF, Its Policies and Program* (Toronto: Ontario CCF, 1944), 6, 10. See also David Lewis and Frank Scott, *Make This Your Canada* (Toronto, 1943); and Sandra Djwa, *The Politics of the Imagination: A life of F.R. Scott* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1987).

29 T.C. Douglas, “Saskatchewan springboard,” CCF 25th Anniversary Souvenir booklet (Ottawa: CCF, 1957), 26.

30 M.J. Coldwell, “Canada’s Foreign Policy,” in *Planning for Freedom*, 165, 171; M.J. Coldwell, *Left Turn, Canada* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1945); Greg Donaghy, “Solidarity Forever: The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation and its Search for an International Role, 1939–1949,” *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 5 (1992): 89–111.

extended to opposing economic autarky in any country, instead embracing the expanded global trade so important to Canada's economy — albeit trade in a planned global economy. It also meant that socialist policy could postpone nationalizations, if that fit better with world conditions and with the primary goal — in Scott's words — of emancipating the human spirit.³¹

In 1944, the CCF came to power not in an industrialized province with strong labour movements, but in Saskatchewan, an agrarian economy dependent on wheat production for export. The CCF government under Premier Douglas aimed at economic diversification, improved social programmes and standards of living through schemes such as rural electrification, and the gradual construction of a socialist "cooperative commonwealth." Although a province rather than a new state, its economic dilemmas in many ways paralleled those of newly-independent countries in Asia after 1945. So, too, did its methods of developmentalist economics, which included policies towards the indigenous-majority northern regions that have been characterized as internal colonialism. As in Indonesia and Burma, among other new states, development served the interests of the centre and was imposed upon ethnically-different outlying regions.³²

The Douglas government brought in George Cadbury, a prominent member of the chocolate-making family, industrialist, and British Labour party activist, as Chief Industrial Economist, head of the Government Finance Office that ran the new socialized crown corporations. Most significantly, he led the new Economic Advisory and Planning Board, "the first comprehensive economic and social planning mechanism in a democratic country," coming in advance of British and French national planning boards. This board attracted bright enthusiastic young Canadians from across the country to carry out "one of the major economic and social experiments of our time," but was condemned as "imported experts" by opposition politicians and the press.³³

While trying to pioneer socialist planning, the CCF had to come to terms with the limits of a poor province in a capitalist country and a capitalist world economy. Cadbury laid out the dilemma:

As Socialists, we believe such means to real wealth should be controlled and directed for the common good and not left to the whims of individual control.

31 Lewis and Scott, 35; Scott's speech to CCF convention cited in David Lewis, *The Good Fight: Political Memoirs 1909–1958* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1981), 378–9.

32 David Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005).

33 George W. Cadbury, "Planning in Saskatchewan," in *Essays on the Left*, eds. Laurier LaPierre, et al. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971), 51–2; George W. Cadbury, "Saskatchewan: Democratic Social Ownership," *Public Affairs* (December 1948): 273; "Planning Board," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* editorial (29 January 1946); SAB, Economic Advisory and Planning Board papers (hereafter EAPB), R-880, file 12, "Who are these experts?" unattributed brief.

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But we live in a world where the rights of individually owned property are the normal determinant of industrial discretion, and the so called laws of supply and demand are left to regulate our affairs In these circumstances, a Provincial community can do little more than make a determined gesture to indicate what it means by socialist method and to indicate what it would do were it in control of national affairs. Its day to day tactics must be opportunistic and its operations be measured in part by the current criteria of the capitalist world in which it lives.³⁴

Private enterprise, then, was a necessary evil. The language here is strongly reminiscent of that used by Indonesian socialist leader Sutan Sjahrir, who argued in one of the great debates of the early Indonesian revolution that foreign investment must be welcomed because of the country's geographical situation within "the sphere of Anglo-Saxon capitalism and imperialism So long as the world we live in is dominated by capital, we are forced to make sure that we do not earn the enmity of capitalism."³⁵

Early hopes of working with the British Labour government or co-operatives to develop potential oil reserves came to nought. From Montréal, Scott recommended the use of private investors to develop Saskatchewan's oil reserves. To attract investors, Cadbury recalled, the CCF had to prove "that although we were wicked socialists we also were honest."³⁶ Its natural resources minister promised investment conditions for oil companies would be "as satisfactory as those prevailing in any other Canadian Province." In many cases, they were more favourable, as Saskatchewan tried to pry investment away from neighbouring Alberta. Douglas, for instance, assured oilman William F. Buckley Sr. that Saskatchewan's policy "is opposed to any policy of a confiscatory character with respect to the petroleum industry."³⁷ Yet this was

34 SAB, EAPB, R-757, file 4 [3], "Government, Co-operatives and Private Enterprise in Industry," 24 September 1946.

35 Sutan Sjahrir, *Our Struggle* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1968), 24, 31. Original published in 1945 as *Perjuangan Kita*.

36 SAB, R-8342 to 8345, George W. Cadbury oral history, interview by Jean Larmour, Oakville Ont., 18 January 1982; *ibid.*, R-827, file 44, Cadbury to Douglas, 8 March 1948; *ibid.*, R-757, file 2, Cadbury to Herbert Morrison, 28 September 1951; *ibid.*, R-33.5 II-43 [1], F.R. Scott to Douglas [1945]; Jean Larmour, "The Douglas Government's Changing Emphasis on Public, Private and Co-operative Development in Saskatchewan, 1955-1961," in *Building the Co-operative Commonwealth: Essays on the Democratic Socialist Tradition in Canada*, ed. J. William Brennan (Regina, Sask.: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1984), 161-80; John Richards and Larry Pratt, *Prairie Capitalism: Power and Influence in the New West* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1979); Meyer Brownstone, "The Douglas-Lloyd Governments: Innovation and Bureaucratic Adaptation," in Lapierre, et al.

37 SAB, R-33.5 II-43 [1], Statement for minister Brockelbank and comparison charts; "Look Who's Talking!" *The Albertan* editorial (9 April 1949); SAB, R-33.5 II-43 [2], Douglas to Buckley, 3 April 1951.

a pragmatic decision based on perceived needs in the North American context, rather than an ideological softening. The stated commitment to socialist planning remained. Throughout his career, Cadbury continued to believe that "Planning and Socialism are synonymous." The CCF had compromised on public ownership, in order to maintain the key principle of planning.³⁸

"Working out our techniques for harnessing the positive factors and limiting the negative ones, we are certainly writing Canadian history and setting patterns that may be of great use in a wider field," Cadbury wrote to a British friend.³⁹ Leaving the planning board, he noted his job as founding visionary was done, but saw "shades of Saskatchewan" in his new work as UNTAA operations director.⁴⁰ This would be truer still in Cadbury's later work as advisor to the government of Ceylon, or as chief of the Central Planning Unit in Jamaica, where he tried to establish direct Jamaica-Saskatchewan planning ties.⁴¹ The UNTAA was no carbon copy of the Saskatchewan planning bodies, of course, but it pursued essentially the same social-democratic development philosophy on a global scale.

F.R. Scott and the UN technical assistance mission in Burma

Technical assistance to Burma was the third-largest among UN programmes; the post of first UN Technical Assistance Resident Representative went to F.R. Scott. Alongside nationalism in Burma was an almost universal adherence to socialism. The Burma Socialist Party, dominant in the national government, had a number of similarities to the CCF. It offered a rousing assertion of Burmese socialism that rejected Moscow-led international communism. At the same time, its faith in planning and expertise located Burma very much in the global context and opted for internationalist rather than nationalist methods, exemplified through the close link with UN technical assistance machinery. Burmese governments welcomed technical assistance, and they welcomed it from a range of sources. As a promising country with ample resources, an English-speaking élite and solid non-communist nationalist credentials, Burma also appeared to key donors as an attractive candidate for assistance.

At the 1947 Sorrento Villa conference in Rangoon, Aung San's Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League (AFPFL) called for a planned, socialist economy, "which will ensure that a fair share of the fruits passes on to the com-

38 George W. Cadbury, "How to Plan in a Democracy," in *Democratic Planning: A Symposium* (Toronto: Ontario Woodsworth Memorial Foundation, 1968); SAB, R-827, file 50, Cadbury statement on leaving the EAPB, 11 January 1951.

39 SAB, R-8342 to 8345, Cadbury to Lionel Elvin, 3 June 1946.

40 Ibid., R-33.1 CXX-949, Cadbury to Douglas, 18 February 1951.

41 For instance, see *ibid.*, Cadbury to Douglas, 21 March 1955, arguing that "it makes a lot of sense for two Governments like Saskatchewan and Jamaica to help one another. How about your grapefruit problems!"

mon man.” Although the sketchiest of outlines, the Sorrento Villa programme launched a wish list that guided later planning, entrenched the idea of planning by “a small expert body,” served as the AFPFL “economic testament,” and pointed to a non-communist, leftist programme with broad popular appeal.⁴² Even without specifics, talk of development and social justice helped the AFPFL, which was dominated by the Socialists, to fend off challenges from communists and others. The call to nationalize industry meshed well with a move to reduce foreign economic control, since most large business was owned by British investors and smaller business was dominated by ethnic Indians living in Burma. Burmese socialist internationalism was evident, meanwhile, in its leading role in convening the Asian Socialist conferences of 1953 and 1956, in close partnership with Indian and Indonesian socialist parties.⁴³

Thus, the socialist-dominated AFPFL government of Prime Minister U Nu sought outside expertise. U Nu was willing to welcome foreign investment in order to boost production. “Nationalization is not an end but only a means in the socialist scheme of things,” he told critics that accused him of backsliding away from socialism.⁴⁴ The government hired a large team of American engineers and economists to survey and plan the country’s economy, run by a liberal New Dealer close to United States trade unions and hence considered politically acceptable.⁴⁵ Still, a bad taste often clung to American aid, as Frank Scott noted soon after his arrival in Rangoon in 1952. This was a problem because it increased suspicion of all Western aid — a category in which he placed the UN’s own programmes. Canada might have lessons to offer Burma. After all, in Scott’s words, it was itself “a country which has not yet fully awakened from the sleep of colonialism.”⁴⁶ Yet Burma was largely a great unknown to

42 Frank N. Trager, *Burma: From Kingdom to Republic* (New York: Praeger, 1966), 152–3; Governor of Burma to Secretary of State for Burma, 12 July 1947, document 440 in *Burma: The Struggle for Independence 1944–1948*, ed. Hugh Tinker, vol. 2 (London: HMSO, 1984); UNA, S-0175-0200-007, TE 322/1, U Thet Tun, “A Review of Economic Planning in Burma,” no date [filed in UN registry 1960].

43 Saul Rose, *Socialism in Southern Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959); Kyaw Zaw Win, “The Asian Socialist Conference in 1953 as precursor to the Bandung Conference in 1955,” paper presented at the Asian Studies Association of Australia, 29 June–2 July 2004, <<http://coombs.anu.edu.au/SpecialProj/ASAA/biennial-conference/2004/KyawZawWin-ASAA2004.pdf>>, (accessed 23 June 2008).

44 Louis J. Walinsky, *Economic Development in Burma 1951–1960* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1962), 73.

45 John F. Cady, *The United States and Burma* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1976), 213; Walinsky, xxi, 84; Knappen Tippetts Abnett Engineering Co., *Preliminary Report on Economic and Engineering Survey of Burma for Burma Economic Council January 1952*, vii. See also UNA, S-0175-0200-077, TE 322/1, Robert R. Nathan Associates, “Evaluation of the Capital Programme, 1952–53 to 1957–58.”

46 LAC, F.R. Scott papers (hereafter FRS), MG30 D211/5/9, F.R. Scott, “ECA does *this* damage,” 1952, handwritten note; Scott, “A Decade of the LSR.”

Canadians — a “republic of rice and rubies” in the title of one study guide produced for the Canadian armed forces, home to “a charming, easy-going and indolent race,” according to the *Globe and Mail*.⁴⁷

Scott’s report on the 1952 May Day celebrations summed up his impressions of Burma. Despite outwards signs of nationalism, Scott read the ceremonies as being socialist and internationalist: “When the flag was raised and all the heads of the little cheroot rollers bowed reverently down, I felt they were more filled with thankfulness rather than narrower nationalism.” Here was a government worth fighting for; even its federal character was “similar to that in Canada.” Above all, Burma was a hopeful socialist democracy. “What makes technical assistance in Burma so important is that it makes the success of this democratic experiment more likely.”⁴⁸ Scott reported that security and development were linked. Since the government was trying to control as much of Burma as possible, and develop those areas in order to entice back those in rebellion, “all forms of technical assistance which help the government put its development plans into effect are also forms of assistance in the solution of Burma’s major problems of security.”⁴⁹ Similar rationales underlay American and British financial assistance to Burma’s government. The UN’s technical assistance efforts fit into a broader Western state effort.

Advice from American and UN experts informed the “Pyidawtha” development policy approved in 1952. Thant Myint-U translates Pyidawtha as the Pleasant Land, pleasant in the sense of “a pleasing view or an agreeably furnished home. It was a social democratic vision of the future, of a welfare state and government-managed development within the framework of a parliamentary democracy.”⁵⁰ An eight-year plan envisioned spending the equivalent of \$227-million on economic development, with more than a third to be raised overseas as aid or capital investment, to help raise production to slightly above the pre-war level and GDP by some two-thirds from the current low level. That would require “a high level of international trade,” the government conceded, adding that “Burma can remain economically *independent and self-supporting*, but can never become *economically self-sufficient*” (emphasis in original). There was no autarky here, and socialism had been modified to meet the new international circumstances without abandoning the emphasis on social justice.⁵¹ Burma had broken free of British colonialism, refusing even to join the

47 *Burma: Republic of Rice and Rubies — Current Affairs for the Canadian Forces* 9, no. 1 (December 1955); “Burma Moves Left,” *Globe and Mail* editorial (19 June 1948), 6.

48 LAC, FRS 5/9, Scott’s May Day report 1952, 1 May 1952; *ibid.*, Scott’s report to UNTAA for 1 May to 30 June 1952.

49 *Ibid.*, Scott’s report to UNTAA for 19–31 March 1952.

50 Thant Myint-U, *The River of Lost Footsteps: Histories of Burma* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2006), 273.

51 *Pyidawtha: The New Burma* (Rangoon: Economic and Social Board, 1954).

Commonwealth, but its government had no intention of disentangling itself economically from global trading systems dominated by the old imperial powers.

Scott finished his term as UNTAA resident representative early, suffering from health problems and struck by the vastness of the task. Meeting the minister of information, he jotted in his diary: "A boy in a barn of a building. So little with which to do so much." His faith in technical assistance was undimmed, but he felt "the foreigners are like foam on the surface of a stream," even in Rangoon.⁵² The task was under way, and the need seemed greater at home. "Burma has plenty of socialists," he wrote to a friend working as a UN expert in Bangkok, "and Canada so few!"⁵³

Benjamin Higgins and Canadian experts on the National Planning Bureau

Burma's technical assistance machinery followed common UNTAA lines. Another major UNTAA focus in Southeast Asia, Indonesia, saw a very different arrangement. This was the National Planning Bureau (*Biro Perantjang Negara*, BPN, later and more accurately translated as State Planning Bureau), a group set up shortly after independence to advise the Indonesian government on the right way to develop. The bureau wrote Indonesia's first five-year development plan, one that formed the model for all the subsequent Indonesian five-year plans.

The UN Technical Assistance Mission in Indonesia took over the facilities and staff left by the UN Commission on Indonesia, which had been created to oversee the transition to political independence. It appeared to see its role as finishing the job in the economic sphere. Its first chief, an Indian former state governor, was criticized for having a colonialist mindset.⁵⁴ Although it oversaw a broad range of projects, the planning bureau lay outside its purview, reporting directly to the Indonesian government. An innovative method saw the UNTAA handle recruiting and salaries, but the foreign experts as confidential employees reporting direct and solely to the Indonesian government. This method was hailed as "politically sound and administratively very neat," by one UNTAA official. "The Indonesians have essential control of the project so that there is no sense of United Nations intrusion," but the UN was able to control costs.⁵⁵ UNTAA staff saw it as a unique and effective planning model that combined respect for sovereignty with effective use of foreign expertise to plan

52 LAC, FRS 5/9, Scott diary; *ibid.*, vol. 92, Scott travel diary, 7 May 1952, Lashio; *ibid.*, Scott to Terence Sheard, Toronto, 8 July 1952.

53 *Ibid.*, Scott to Kenneth Sinclair-Louttit, 11 July 1952.

54 UNA, TA, box 53, 330/1/01, Arthur Fletcher to Tor Gjesdal, Dept. of Public Information, 19 April 1951; *Ibid.*, S-0441-1030, branch registries 1946–1959, 173/71/04 [A], G. Martínez Cabañas, UNTAA deputy director-general, to Keenleyside; Keenleyside, *Memoirs*, 396–8.

55 UNA, S-0441-1030, 173/71/04 [A], Arthur Goldschmidt to Keenleyside, 6 December 1951; *ibid.*, text of UN-Indonesian agreement, 1951.

development through a “bold and slightly unorthodox approach.” It also offered a chance to build the prestige of the UN itself in Asia. The international organization had its own institutional interest in being seen as the leading force for peace and development; technical assistance projects like this one offered an opportunity to advance those interests. Accordingly, Keenleyside inked the deal with visiting Indonesian cabinet minister Sumitro Djojohadikusumo in 1951.⁵⁶ Sumitro was especially keen that foreign experts be “post Keynesians” and not “colonially minded” — a reference, perhaps, to the presence at the UNTAA of H.J. van Mook, the last lieutenant-governor of the Dutch East Indies.⁵⁷ Of the nine initial foreign experts on the planning bureau, four had connections to Canada — McGill University economist Benjamin Higgins, demographer Nathan Keyfitz, migration expert Douglas Deane, and André Brichant, a Belgian mining engineer with Canadian residency. There were even concerns that “there is a limit to the number of Canadians we can have on the Planning Bureau” out of respect to Indonesian feelings (it was more important still to limit the number of Americans, to show UN independence from Washington).⁵⁸

Higgins was so dominant that Australian diplomats reported he was “head of the Indonesian Planning Bureau.” Higgins himself wrote from Jakarta that the “government shows an almost frightening willingness to accept my advice.”⁵⁹ This was a period before the field of “development economics” was created. Higgins was one of the field’s pioneers. He hoped to see the end of colonialism accompanied by a grand multilateral development effort: “The job done by the colonial powers in the past can now be done by the United Nations and other foreign aid programs.”⁶⁰ As actors in the development process, Indonesians were “no different in this respect from Canadians.”⁶¹ He located obstacles to development in the traditional sector, and hoped for increased production and industrialization dependent on foreign investment. Higgins told the Indonesian government the only way to create the “national economy”

56 Ibid., Sir Mirza Ismail, Technical Assistance Resident Representative in Jakarta, to Keenleyside, 8 August 1951; *ibid.*, Martinez-Cabeñas to Keenleyside, 27 September 1951; *ibid.*, account of Sumitro-Keenleyside talks, 28 June 1951.

57 Ibid., 173/71/04 [B], TARR A. Balinski to Cadbury, 25 March 1952.

58 Ibid., 173/71/04 [C], Higgins to Keenleyside, 25 August 1952.

59 National Archives of Australia, A11064, 809/1 [1], Australian High Commission in Colombo memorandum to Australian Dept. of External Affairs, 26 February 1953; MUA, RG2/2075567, Higgins to Cyril James, Principal of McGill, 2 September 1952.

60 Benjamin Higgins, radio address over Trans-Canada Network, as part of Canadian Institute of Public Affairs conference, Lake Couchiching, 17 August 1955, in Benjamin Higgins, *Nationalism and Colonialism* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Center for International Studies, 1955). See also Benjamin Higgins, “Economic Development of Underdeveloped Areas: Past and present,” *Ekonomi dan Keuangan Indonesia* 7 (1954): 778–99.

61 Harvard University Archives (hereafter HUA), Nathan Keyfitz papers (hereafter NK), box 7, Indonesia 1953–4, “Concrete recommendations,” undated memorandum by Higgins and Keyfitz.

they longed for was “the one that has been followed by the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand” — being open to foreign investment.⁶² The great barrier to that was economic nationalism. Higgins analyzed Indonesian politics in terms of two groups: the “development-minded” leaders willing to cooperate with the West, and the “history-minded” nationalists who were not: in essence, a split over economic nationalism. One success for the UNTAA, he argued, was the mere existence of a functioning planning bureau, which aided the development-minded group.⁶³ The developmentalist group was not popular. It was strongest in the small Indonesian Socialist Party (PSI) of Sjahrir and Sumitro, which leaned towards the right wing of the Indonesian political spectrum. The socialists were more Fabian than Marxist, closer to the CCF-NDP than to communists, linked with the Burmese socialists as prime moving forces behind the Asian Socialist conferences. Reading their policy statements, F.R. Scott called them “remarkably similar” to a revised and more moderate statement of CCF principles being worked on in the 1950s.⁶⁴ Sjahrir argued that increasing production was “more important for Asia than to transfer property-rights from the hands of that small group which, at present, owns the existing means of production, into the hands and control of the community. Socialist planning does not exclusively mean nationalisation or socialisation.”⁶⁵

Another main aspect of the planning bureau, apart from this bolstering of the “development-minded” group over the economic nationalists, was to promote the *attitudes* of modernization. To quote an Indonesian staff member: “The National Planning Bureau experts were supplied with a method of thinking and acting which was rational and reliable, while always having a national spirit and the determination to serve the state and the nation loyally.”⁶⁶ With the appointment of Djuanda Kartawidjaja as head of the planning bureau, the stamp was set upon “rational” development planning. Troubles remained over ultimate control of the planning bureau; the “supersensitive” refusal of Djuanda to permit experts to consult easily with the UNTAA upset some in New York, but was, ultimately, retained because of the “great importance we attach” to the

62 Benjamin Higgins, “Encouragement of Foreign Investments in Indonesia,” MIT Centre for International Studies document, 14 September 1954.

63 Benjamin Higgins, *All the Difference: A Development Economist's Quest* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992); Benjamin Higgins with Jean Higgins, *Indonesia: The Crisis of the Millstones* (Princeton, NJ: D. van Nostrand, 1963); UNA, S-0441-1030, 173/71/04 [G], Higgins to TAA, 21 October 1955.

64 LAC, FRS 5/9, F.R. Scott to Lorne Ingle, CCF national office, 16 June 1952.

65 Sjahrir, *Indonesian Socialism*, cited in Rose, 157–8.

66 Kusudiarso Hadinoto, cited in “*Abdi Negara dan Abdi Bangsa*” [Servant of the State and Servant of the Nation], Ali Budiardjo, appendix in *Ir. H. Djuanda: Negarawan, Administrator, Teknokrat Utama* [Engineer Haji Djuanda: Statesman, Administrator, Eminent Technocrat], Awaloedin Djamin (Jakarta: Kompas, 2002), 255.

planning bureau.⁶⁷ When Higgins finished his term, the UNTAA tried to manoeuvre George Cadbury into a position as “chief planner” and head of all foreign experts in Indonesia, a prospect Cadbury welcomed as “a Herculean task but ... one in which my Saskatchewan experience will be of great help.”⁶⁸ Djuanda, however, managed in the course of some “rather stormy” meetings to convince the UNTAA to continue backing the planning bureau with himself as sole director. Nor was he willing to accept proposals from Higgins (now director of the Indonesia project at MIT’s Center for International Studies and a participant with Walt Rostow, Paul Rosenstein-Rodan, and others in the “big push” development theory) for a restructuring of the bureau, especially as the two tussled for ultimate control.⁶⁹ Djuanda ensured that the bureau served Indonesian state needs, but its presence in Indonesia underlined the UN’s mission in development planning enough to also serve UN interests. Visiting Jakarta, Cadbury seemed impressed with Djuanda and the popularity of UN-sponsored assistance “because of its impartiality.”⁷⁰ Thus, as the initial planning bureau term drew to a close, the UN’s technical assistance planners agreed to continue the project, concluding that any efforts to increase UN oversight could endanger the bureau’s survival.⁷¹ The bureau’s eventual five-year plan identified a role for the state, not out of ideological commitment, but because of the weakness of domestic private capital. Its job was to give the economy a “big push” and then stand aside in favour of the new domestic private capital that planners hoped would grow.⁷²

It is not that foreign planners were dictating to Indonesia. There was a community of interest, rather than a command relationship; the research and perspectives of the foreign experts reinforced Indonesian planners’ own ideas on economic growth and influenced them further in the direction of Western development models. International economic conditions and Indonesian poli-

67 UNA, S-0441-1030, 173/71/04 [D], Marcel Schwab to Eleanor Hinder, TAA Asia and far East chief, 17 July 1953; *ibid.*, 173/71/04 [E], Hinder to Balinski, 10 December 1953; *ibid.*, 173/71/04 [G], Balinski to Hinder, 18 February 1955.

68 *Ibid.*, 173/71/04 [E], Cadbury to Keyfitz, 11 December 1953.

69 *Ibid.*, Hinder to Cadbury 17 February 1954; Balinski to Hinder, 22 February 1954; Higgins to Hinder 23 March 1954; Djuanda to Higgins, 13 May 1954; Cadbury to Hinder 5 May 1954; *ibid.*, 173/71/04 [G], Balinski to Hinder 14 December 1954; Donald Blackmer, *The MIT Center for International Studies: The founding years 1951–1969* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Center for International Studies, 2002); Benjamin Higgins, “The Indonesian Five-Year Plan: Proposals for research,” CIS document, 6 September 1957.

70 UNA, S-0441-1030, 173/71, 04 [E], Cadbury to Hinder, 27 April 1954.

71 *Ibid.*, 173/71/04 [G], Ahmed to Rosenberg, 9 Nov. 1955; Ahmed to Goldschmidt, 31 October 1955.

72 *Garis-Garis Besar Rentjana Pembangunan Lima Tahun 1956–1960* [Broad Outlines of the Five-Year Development Plan 1956–1960] (Jakarta: National Planning Bureau, 1956); Higgins, *Crisis of the Millstones*; LAC, RG25, vol., 2496, file 10463-BD-40 [1], annual report of the Canadian commercial attaché in Jakarta, 1956.

tics, however, made implementing such models a difficult task. Foreign advisors found this increasingly frustrating. In the report of Beatrice Keyfitz, wife of one advisor:

The foreign experts are the real blight around here They are a very unhappy bunch of men, but not one of them has had the courage to say "I can't do any good here, so I'm going home." They sit out their terms, growling bitterly, and hoping for a renewal.⁷³

The pupil tended to disappoint. There were strong echoes here of Western missionaries, trapped in the walled compounds of China, their hopes of evangelization more and more forlorn.⁷⁴

J.T. Cawley, oil negotiations and economic nationalism

During Indonesian President Sukarno's nationalist "guided democracy," images of Indonesia moved from promising pupil to volatile adversary of the West. Some Canadians remained sympathetic to an increasingly assertive Indonesia. This was especially true in CCF circles, which were beginning to embrace economic nationalism at home. The most important Indonesian effort to wrest control of a vital sector of the economy from foreign ownership came in 1962–1963 in the oil sector. It drew on the advice of a UN technical expert, J.T. Cawley, seconded from his job as deputy minister of mineral resources in the CCF government of Saskatchewan. This experience saw him serve as petroleum advisor in successive three-month postings to Pakistan in 1958 and Burma in 1959. He left home again in 1961, following a dispute with his minister whom he felt had given overly favourable terms to American companies mining for potash in Saskatchewan. "That's when I went to Indonesia," he recalled. "I took off! I said I wouldn't be a party to that."⁷⁵

Indonesian oil reserves were not the world's largest, but they were significant. Until the 1960s, Indonesian oil was pumped entirely by three majors: Shell (originally formed early in the twentieth century to exploit the oil of the Indies) and American consortiums Stanvac (Esso and Mobil) and Caltex (Standard Oil of California and Texaco). In the early 1960s, Sukarno's govern-

73 HUA, NK, box 2, correspondence 1953–4, Beatrice Keyfitz to "Mrs. Fellows," 25 November 1953.

74 Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American women missionaries in turn-of-the-century China* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984).

75 LAC, RG25, vol. 6985, file 5495-G-40 [4], UN news release TA/1017, 28 December 1961; UN document E/CN.11/I&NR/L.39, ECAFE Committee on Industry & Natural Resources, "United Nations Technical Assistance Provided to Countries in Asia and the Far East during 1963 in the Fields of Industry and Natural Resources," 16 December 1963; SAB, R-33.1 IX-390, Saskatchewan cabinet memoranda, natural resources department staff; *ibid.*, R-A961, J.T. Cawley oral history, interview by Berry Richards, audiotape, 9 July 1976.

ment began to seek production-sharing agreements with independent oil “minors” and tried to exert more control and gain more revenues from the big three oil companies. In this, they relied upon Cawley for advice and expertise, on advice from the UN technical assistance resident representative to Chaerul Saleh, the minister of basic industries and mining, that Cawley was “the right man” to advise on tactics in dealing with American oil companies.⁷⁶ Cawley had built up substantial experience dealing with foreign-owned oil companies in Saskatchewan. He showed no anti-corporate bias, although in Saskatchewan he preferred to work with local companies led by “vigorous young men with imagination and courage” and “a high degree of loyalty to Saskatchewan.” Cawley was a strong believer that natural resources should pay back to the people. For instance, he advocated internationalizing the Alberta/Saskatchewan oil practice of “checkerboarding” under which land around an oil discovery was divided into four squares, two of them being reserved for the government, with the right to develop those lands auctioned off and the government getting as much as 60–70 percent of production.⁷⁷

Indonesian authorities were determined to get a fresh deal with the three oil majors that earned them enough foreign exchange to fund development plans. Although the companies claimed they earned Indonesia \$300 million a year, the foreign exchange figure was more like \$20 million, with no hard currency earnings at all in some years, Cawley calculated.⁷⁸ To change that, Indonesian officials introduced a new petroleum law mandating oil development by state enterprises, but permitted it to be sub-contracted to foreign companies. Behind Indonesian tactics, American officials believed, was the hand of the UN expert, Cawley, whose Saskatchewan natural resources department had tangled with American oil companies and with Esso’s Canadian subsidiary, Imperial Oil — and indeed the UN resident representative confirmed that Cawley was “deeply involved ... behind the scenes.” There were American complaints over Cawley’s advocacy of checkerboarding and public ownership in his prior Pakistan and Burma postings. “In fact, it is my impression that Mr. Cawley has earned, whether it is deserved or not, the undying anathema of the international oil companies operating in Southeast Asia and Indonesia,” Canada’s embassy in Washington concluded.⁷⁹ Similarly,

76 UNA, S-0175-0642, 322/1 INDO (111-1) [B], TARR Vojko Pavicic to J.M. Saunders, technical assistance bureau, 1 March 1962.

77 SAB, R-33.1 IV-168 [2], Natural resources department memorandum to Douglas, 30 April 1956; *ibid.*, R-33.1 IX-391, Douglas to A.F. Wolther, Morse SK, 7 February 1956.

78 UNA, S-0175, 22/1 INDO (111-1) [A], Draft response to *Wall Street Journal* article.

79 LAC, RG25, vol. 6789, file 1529-40 [2.2], Memorandum for file by N.R. Chappell, energy counsellor at Canadian embassy in Washington, 12 March 1963; UNA, S-0175, 22/1 INDO (111-1) [B], Pavicic to Saunders, 1 March 1962.

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the American ambassador in Jakarta complained that Cawley, a “fanatical gleam in his eye,” was operating with an ingrained bias against the oil companies.⁸⁰

Authorities called Cawley from Bandung to Jakarta to advise on oil talks a month after his 1961 arrival. His first request was that headquarters find him a standard North American unit accounting schedule, obtainable from Mobil in New York — but “don’t tell them why you want it.” Use of such schedules, he wrote, were normal practice in North America, but avoided by oil companies operating overseas because they reduced the company’s “flexibility” in accounting.⁸¹ Indonesian goals concentrated on increasing the government’s share of earnings from oil exports from the 50–50 split standard in the Middle East, to a 60–40 split in the government’s favour, while also making sure the government share came in foreign currency rather than in soft rupiah. Given the effect this might have on their world operations, the oil majors resisted through 1962 until a smaller company, Pan American Oil, agreed to a 60–40 split. Stanvac, the first major to face a contract re-negotiation, then felt compelled to accept the same 60–40 principle, following a government ultimatum that might have ended in the loss of all Stanvac concessions in Indonesia. Even while calling the majors “the best and most competent in the world” and “tough but fair negotiators” managed by “men of integrity and honour,” Cawley backed the Indonesian hard line in negotiations, convinced that the demand for a greater share of income for development spending was fair.⁸²

After the government imposed a deadline, Stanvac and Caltex came forward with better offers, but talks stalled over issues including the price to be paid by the government as it followed through on its plans to take over the companies’ refining and domestic marketing operations. “The companies are hiding behind the phrase ‘fair value’ which they do not wish to define,” Cawley reported.

They want a so called independent appraiser to evaluate assets upon a “replacement” basis. This would be the same as buying a second hand car for the price of a new one. This is not fair and they know it.

Cawley told the Canadian embassy there was no plan for the government to nationalize Shell, Caltex, or Stanvac, but “made rather sinister references to the Government’s ability to maintain the upper hand.” What he had recommended was that the government force a deal by imposing a 30-day deadline for nego-

80 John F. Kennedy Library (hereafter JFKL), National Security Files (hereafter NSF), box 114, Indonesia 5/63, Ambassador Howard Jones to Secretary of State Dean Rusk, 27 May 1963.

81 UNA, S-0175-0642, 322/1 INDO (111-1) [B], Cawley to Chi-Yuen Wu, technical assistance bureau, 20 February 1962; *ibid.*, Cawley to Saunders, 17 April 1962.

82 *Ibid.*, Cawley to Saunders, 30 April 62.

tiations. For good measure he prepared both the implementing regulation and the regulations to be imposed if no deal was reached, authorizing government take-overs — a plan Chaerul Saleh accepted.⁸³

Indonesian brinkmanship succeeded in gaining the direct intervention of President John F. Kennedy's government, which sent threats and then despatched an envoy to mediate talks between Sukarno and the companies in Tokyo. Their 1963 agreement gave the Indonesian government the control and increased income it sought, a projected \$80 million a year in foreign exchange compared to \$17 million in 1961, and what Cawley called "a very substantial and favourable series of contracts with foreign enterprise second to none in the world." The oil companies gained, for the first time, secure tenure of their existing concessions and the right to new exploration areas. Although the new pro-American political climate saw Cawley leave quickly, his stamp was on the deal.⁸⁴

Cawley worked to realize Indonesian basic principles: more state control of the resource, so it could be used for the benefit of the people. This is not unlike the efforts he had been working on back in Saskatchewan. He was not driving the Indonesian agenda, but he saw his home province offering lessons for the Indonesian state as it struggled to gain control over its natural wealth without losing the expertise necessary to exploit the resource and earn the foreign exchange needed to fund development programmes. He accepted economic nationalism in a way that Higgins and the other planning bureau experts had not done ten years earlier. But he still upheld the idea of rational planning and modernization. As he wrote in his final report, "for future growth and the establishment of educational facilities and techniques, an astute constructive attitude is imperative."⁸⁵

Conclusion: The development of development

When Frank Scott was about to leave for Burma, CCF leader Coldwell wrote him to point out that he would have "some very congenial colleagues," listing CCF members and sympathizers posted throughout the UN's technical assistance machinery, starting with Keenleyside himself, a man "keenly sympathetic

83 LAC, RG25/6789/1529-40 [2.2], Canadian embassy Jakarta to Department of External Affairs, 6 April 1963; UNA, S-0175-0642, 322/1 INDO (111-1) [A], Cawley to Ricardo Luna, technical assistance operations chief for Asia, 4 February 1963; Republic of Indonesia presidential decree 18/1963.

84 Alex Hunter, "The Oil Industry: The 1963 Agreements and After," *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 2 (September 1965); UNA, S-0175-0642, 322/1 INDO (111-1) [B], Cawley final report, 26 July 1963; JFKL, NSF, box 114, Indonesia 5/63, Jones to Rusk, 26 May 1963; *ibid.*, Jones to Rusk, 27 May 1963.

85 UNA, S-0175-0642, 322/1 INDO (111-1) [B], Cawley final report.

to our views.”⁸⁶ The CCF never managed to govern Canada and put its ambitious plans into action, but many CCFers had far more success in developing countries. Ideas of socialist planning created for Canada’s high-income developing economy were implemented in cooperation with the first generation of policy-makers in independent Indonesia, Burma, and other countries which found, in Canadians recruited through the UN, a congenial and knowledgeable group to assist their development planning. They were more welcome than advisors linked to the United States government would have been. Nevertheless, the UN’s operations in Southeast Asia were tied closely to American hopes to hold the region within the informal empire based in Washington. In this, Washington and New York had common interests. The UNTAA’s economic development strategy recommendations mostly dovetailed with similar recommendations from the much larger American technical assistance missions established under Truman’s “point four” policy. Again, this does not mean UN advisors and American officials were colluding — though cooperation on the ground was common — but rather that there were common interests and common strategies in play. Social-democrat-minded élite groups in Southeast Asia shared some of UN advisors’ worldview and embraced their strategies in their own economic planning.

The Burmese and Indonesian regimes both changed in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The high hopes initially vested in foreign experts seemed to be dashed at every turn. In Rangoon, U Nu’s government wavered on many things, but never on the insistence that a socialist economy in Burma had to act pragmatically in the international context and draw heavily on foreign technical experts. UNTAA and Burmese government visions meshed well. The international way to socialism in Burma did not bear fruit, however. The Burmese military, frustrated at the apparent failure of the government’s plans and especially at its alleged openness to the claims of ethnic minorities, seized power in 1962. The bright hopes of 1952 were, a decade later, a foil against which the new military government reacted. The regime’s claimed basis of legitimacy rested in a straightforward rejection of the internationalist way to socialism pursued under civilian governments. Instead, they substituted “the Burmese way to socialism,” grounded in autarky and strict military dictatorship. One apologist praised this ideology as follows: “because it was socialist it was good. Because it was Burmese it was better.”⁸⁷

In Jakarta, figures such as President Sukarno, who rejected Western development models, took full power by the late 1950s, although they still maintained a modernizing vision. The perceived failures of the Sukarno vision

86 LAC, FRS 5/9, M.J. Coldwell to Scott, 11 February 1952.

87 Ba Maw, cited in *Burma: A Socialist Nation of Southeast Asia*, David I. Steinberg (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1982), 75.

saw the “development-minded” group return to power on the back of a bloody military take-over in 1965–1966. “Development” then became the central metaphor of Indonesian government rhetoric, when the technocratic élite fostered by the National Planning Bureau came to power in partnership with the army. Political participation was choked off, and a national drive for economic development substituted as justification — indeed, development plans would not have been possible without the repressive political system.⁸⁸ The understanding of “development” [*pembangunan*] shifted from building up a national spirit of self-reliance, to driving for rapid growth.⁸⁹

Development was not only Indonesia’s dominant ideology, but also in many ways the world’s. “Modernization is still humanity’s mission statement,” in Nick Cullather’s summation.⁹⁰ Technical experts who replaced missionaries in Asia after 1945 used the same images of selfless help to backward societies wishing to improve themselves. Like the missionaries, who were in Carol Chin’s expression “beneficent imperialists,” they offered what they saw as the fruits of progress while seeking to change other cultures to be more like their own.⁹¹ The basic thrust of their advice and of UN technical assistance thinking, towards rational planning and the embrace of a Western-derived idea of modernity, dovetailed with Western government strategies to support economic development in non-communist Asian states and blurred the state/non-state distinction. Technical experts in Southeast Asia might best be seen as semi-state actors, unofficial diplomats independent from their government’s diplomacy, but working towards similar goals.

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88 Benedict Anderson, “Old State, New Society: Indonesia’s New Order in Comparative Historical Perspective,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 42, no. 3 (May 1983): 477–96; Hamish McDonald, *Suharto’s Indonesia* (Melbourne: Fontana, 1980); Geoffrey Gunn, “Ideology and the Concept of Government in the Indonesian New Order,” *Asian Survey* 19, no. 8 (1979): 751–69; *Power and Impunity: Human Rights Under the New Order* (London: Amnesty International, 1994); Ali Moertopo, *The Acceleration and Modernization of 25 Years’ Development* (Jakarta: Yayasan Proklamasi, 1973).

89 Ariel Heryanto, “The Development of ‘Development,’” *Indonesia* 46 (1988): 1–24.

90 Cullather, 220.

91 Carol G. Chin, “Beneficent Imperialists: American Women Missionaries in China at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” *Diplomatic History* 27, no. 3 (2003): 327–52.

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